

La Plata Planning Commission
Town Hall, La Plata, Maryland
Regular meeting and work session
November 4, 2008, 7:00 PM

Present: Chairman Rich Gilpin, Keith A. Hettel, Garyton C. Echols, Jr., James Goldsmith – Commission members; Cathy Flerlage, Director of Planning and Zoning; Judith T. Frazier, Town Clerk

Town Staff: Daniel J. Mears, Town Manager; Steven F. Schroeder, Project Manager; David M. Jenkins, Director of Municipal Development

Minutes:

Chairman Gilpin called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM and asked Mr. Goldsmith to lead the Commission and audience in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of October minutes

Mr. Echols moved to approve the minutes of the October meeting. Mr. Hettel seconded the motion and it passed by unanimous vote.

Taco Bell – final site development plan approval

[A staff report dated November 4, 2008 was included in the Planning Commission's meeting packets.]

Jim Gotsch, of Loiederman Soltesz Associates, Inc., was present to provide information regarding the final site development plan and to answer any questions posed by the Planning Commission.

Ms. Flerlage provided an overview of the staff report and noted that the project has received review and approval by the Design Review Board, and SHA approval on the entrance.

Following discussion, Mr. Hettel moved to approve the Taco Bell final site development plan. Mr. Goldsmith seconded the motion and it passed by unanimous vote.

Digges property, Washington Avenue (SW corner of Washington Ave. and East Hawthorne Dr.) - preliminary plat approval *[A staff report dated November 4, 2008 was included in the Planning Commission's meeting packets.]*

Patrick Wackerle, of Loiederman Soltesz Associates, Inc., was present to provide information regarding the preliminary plat and to answer any questions posed by the Planning Commission.

Ms. Flerlage provided an overview of the staff report, which contained a statement that the preliminary plat met all of the required elements described in Town Code § 173-23, and a recommendation from Town staff to approve the preliminary plat.

During discussion, concern was expressed regarding the need to provide sidewalk along Washington Avenue and Hawthorne Drive. It was noted that the County has not yet seen the plat to provide input as to what they may require as to acceleration/deceleration lanes on Washington Avenue,

which may affect the location of a sidewalk. Concern was also expressed that the density proposed by this subdivision would not be in keeping with the surrounding neighborhood.

Following discussion, Mr. Goldsmith moved to approve the Digges property preliminary plat, with the condition that, pedestrian traffic being a high priority, a sidewalk be required on Washington Avenue and East Hawthorne Drive along the full extent of the property. Mr. Echols seconded the motion. Vote on the motion: Mr. Goldsmith and Mr. Echols voted aye; Chairman Gilpin and Mr. Hettel voted nay. The motion failed.

Rezoning – concept presentations

[A staff report dated November 4, 2008 was included in the Planning Commission's meeting packets.]

Spence Bowling, owner of 200 East Hawthorne Drive, presented information regarding his petition to rezone from R-21 to CBT on his 0.946 of an acre of property, which would allow for mixed use of the existing dwelling, with an office on the lower level and an apartment in the existing 2nd story, with a small addition.

During discussion, concern was expressed regarding further extension of commercial zoning on Washington Avenue and on East Hawthorne Drive, and the “island” of commercial such a rezoning would create. Ms. Flerlage noted that the staff report addresses the potential of comprehensively rezoning other neighboring properties to CBT.

Following discussion, the Planning Commission indicated that this rezoning proposal warrants being looked at when the Planning Commission creates a list of properties to comprehensively rezone.

Rick Baldus, one of the owners of 6700 Crain Highway, presented information regarding their petition to rezone from C-H to C-B on the 1.69 acres of property, which would allow for a “lifestyles center” with a mix of office, retain and residential.

During discussion, it was noted that consideration should be given to maintaining C-H zoning on the existing parking area. Staff is to investigate the concept of such a split zoning of a parcel (retaining C-H on the existing parking area.)

Following discussion, the Planning Commission indicated that this rezoning proposal has merit to move forward and advised Mr. Baldus to consider the issue of parking for future development.

There being no further business, Mr. Echols moved to adjourn at 8:36 PM. Mr. Hettel seconded the motion and it carried. The Planning Commission agreed to defer discussion of Comprehensive Plan/2008 update topics until the work session scheduled to be held at the conclusion of the December 2, 2008 meeting.

Submitted by:

Judith T. Frazier
Town Clerk